



Axemen Company

Alpha Company

1st Battalion 121st Field Artillery

2490 25th Street
Camp Shelby, MS 39407-5500

From the Command

CPT Kent Cousins/1SG Paul Eubank

Dear Friends and Family of SECFOR II,



What a busy two weeks it's been since we left Maine. We have been operating between the FOB (Forward Operating Base) immersion and cantonment areas accomplishing our tasks of processing into Mobilization Station Camp Shelby (MCS) and conducting individual marksmanship training while we waited for equipment to arrive from Wisconsin. The motivation, moral and esprit de corps of the soldiers is high and you should all be proud of the professionalism your loved ones are exhibiting.

The acclimation process of us "northerners" has gone extremely well. Although the first couple of days here were similar to the best summer days we could receive in Maine with high temperatures and mild humidity; for the most part, Mother Nature has cooperated in being merciful to us throughout the acclimation process. Temperatures have fluctuated between the low 70s to low to mid 90s with humidity reaching 80% levels. We've experienced a few thunderstorms and are expected to receive more in the next couple of days which should lead to more humidity. The leadership and soldiers have done wonders in ensuring that everyone is continually hydrating (both water and food) themselves.

The equipment we've been receiving from Wisconsin has continued to arrive on a daily basis and distributed down to the line companies. Of particular note are the HMMWVs we've received. I'm personally proud to say they are products with a "Maine" touch as these HMMWVs were refurbished back during the summer of 2004 at the Maine RSMS at Loring and sent to Wisconsin to fill equipment shortages within their state. All are in very good condition and are FMC (Fully Mission Capable) to assist the 1-121st FA Battalion in accomplishing its mobilization training requirements.

We are currently 4-5 soldiers short of 100% qualification on our individually assigned weapons. The issued weapons are a new model with high speed attachments that are new to the majority of us, however; key one-on-one instruction from SFC Roscoe, MSG Tash, & 1SG Eubank have been instrumental to the success we've experienced on the ranges.

The platoon leadership continues to keep the soldiers busy training with available training time to prepare for additional future training lanes. We seem to be "leaning way forward" of the

execution matrix as developed by MCS, but most of this is due to the 41st BCT wrapping up to head out on its mission. They've been given priority over all training areas, assets, and instruction time while our BN lines up 2nd in acquiring remaining training time and equipment.

Alpha Company is now complete with the arrival of the Nevada/Arizona soldiers yesterday afternoon to full strength . . . and then some. 120 highly motivated soldiers in-processed into the 1-121st and are raring to get into training. The group will initially train as a separate element through the initial stages of in-processing and individual training, but will link up with the remainder of our unit throughout different stages of collective training. The leadership of both elements {Maine & Nevada/Arizona} met last night for an introduction meeting and I'm impressed with the similarities in professionalism and initiative the entire team exhibits.

Our heart felt congratulations go out to 2LT Stephen Spearin and MSG Jerry Holmes and their families on the births of their children, Emily and Jeremiah, respectively. You are in our thoughts and prayers as we continue in our mission and we wish you the best.

I'm proud and honored to announce the promotions of the following soldiers to the ranks indicated over the course of the last three weeks (home station and initial two weeks of MCS training). All are hard charging warriors and well deserving soldiers. {Note: See pictures on SECFOR II website}. The soldiers are:

MSG Joseph Guerrette
SGT Richard Aveau
PFC Arthur Churchill
PFC Hugh Goodfellow
PFC John Holland
PFC Raymond McCrary
PFC Kyle Millett
PFC Dustin Pelletier
PFC Aaron Priest
PFC Dennis Troxell
PV2 James Larosa
PV2 Wade Light

As we progress through our training lanes in the following weeks and months, please know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers. Your soldiers are strong individuals with whom you should be very proud. Keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

CPT Kent A. Cousins
Commander { "Axemen 6" }
A Co. 1-121st FA
"On the Way!"

From the HQS/OPS Platoon

1LT Gates/SFC Scott Poulin

A huge welcome from HQ Platoon

Where has the time gone since we left home on 22 April? The Company has been so busy going through record reviews, briefings, PT, shooting our weapons that the days have been a complete blur!



SPC Robinson

At the pistol range, MSG Quiron was highest scorer in the platoon. He led the way for the rest of us to qualify with our pistols. At the rifle range, SPC Hanson was the highest scorer in the platoon. SPC Hanson and SPC Robinson helped so many other soldiers who needed help to be able to qualify not with just a passing score, but a really high score! Great job SPC Hanson and SPC Robinson!!

The rest of the platoon from Nevada and Arizona has finally arrived so we are now at full strength and we are learning about each other. It is totally amazing how close a group of soldiers can get in just a short time.



SPC Hanson

As we look ahead on our training schedule, we will be learn more advance first-aid, land navigation, and how to speak common Arabic words and phrases. We also look forward to the warmer temperatures that Mississippi has to offer us.

As I look at my soldiers, I have great pride in them and what we are doing here. I have no doubt that we will set the standard as other Maine soldiers have done in pass deployments. These men in Headquarters Platoon and the rest of the company are the future leaders of the Maine Army National Guard!! **“On the Way!”**

From the 1st Platoon

CW2 Dave Cheney/SFC John Martin

Greetings from First Platoon.

We are in our second week of training here at Mob Center Shelby. So far the pace has been sporadic. Some days are pretty relaxed while others are very busy. Daily life here usually

consists of a 0500 wake up followed by an hour pf Physical Training then it's of to Chow and shower before we start our training for the day. We usually finish our training around 1700 in time to have a hot meal at the end of the day. Then we start our prep for the next day and get to bed around 2200, so we can be ready to start fresh again the next day.

If I could ask anything from you it would be to send letters and care packages. Mail call is usually at the end of the training day and getting something from home is a good way to end our day, so please continue to send pictures, postcards, and letters and anything that you think will help brighten the day of your soldier.

The soldiers are in good hands here. The leadership of the Company at all levels is always looking out for the health and welfare of the Alpha Company men. We are striving for the best training that we can provide so that every soldier has what they need to have a safe deployment experience.



SSG Joshua Willett

I would like to congratulate SGT Ron Ruhlin on being the top rifleman for the Company. SGT Ruhlin scored a total of 37 hits out of a possible 40.

I would also like to congratulate SSG Josh Willett, First Squad Leader for his outstanding performance at the 9mm Range. He scored 3 perfect scores 30 hits for day qualification, 5 hits for NBC qualification and 4 hits for night qualification.



SGT Ronald Ruhlin

Master Sergeant Tash is working on a short movie of our training that we hope to have available for the Christmas time frame. Also, the Family Program website should have pictures posted so that you can see what's going on down here.

SFC John Martin
First Platoon Sergeant
"First Platoon Leads The Way"

From the 2nd Platoon

1LT Michael Gary/SFC Bruce Roscoe

Second Platoon has been deployed to Camp Shelby Mississippi for just over two weeks now, and has proven itself to be up to any challenges the army can throw at us. Whether firing on the rifle range, staying awake during a whole day of briefings or learning to function on limited amounts of sleep, we can do it all.



SGT Richard Aveau

After we arrived here, Specialist Richard Aveau was promoted to SGT/E-5 and Privates John Holland and Raymond McCrary were promoted to PFC/E-3. Congratulations on well-deserved promotions.



L to R: PFC McCrary, PFC Holland

We flew into Gulfport Mississippi after a four hour flight that was uneventful, except for the wonderful wait staff on the airplane. The stewardesses couldn't have been more helpful and treated each of us as their own son. We also want to thank the United Biker's of Maine who escorted our buses from the Augusta armory to the Portland Jetport with a fifty motorcycle motorcade complete with a big American Flag on every bike.

Flying into Gulfport, we observed a lot of damage left over from Hurricane Katrina and plenty of the houses still have tarps for roofs. If you get a minute, say a prayer for them, as well as for you loved one here at Camp Shelby. The Mississippi National Guard Air Base we flew into was all set up to receive us with big tubs of icy cold bottled water and donuts and they were certainly organized. We don't believe we were on the ground more than one hour before all the baggage was transferred onto trucks and we were on the road again.

Since arriving at Camp Shelby, every day is busy. We are running from one commitment to another. Right now, Saturday May 6th, we have most of the platoon at CLS {Combat Life Saver} classes while the other half is off helping the supply sergeant out. We had a day of M4 Rifle classes and a day of M9 Pistol classes. They were followed by long days at those respective ranges shooting. How long? We were up at three forty five a.m. and stayed on the rifle range until one thirty the next morning doing night qualification. The same morning, we were up again at five a.m. and off to the M9 Pistol range. PFC John Holland from Berwick shot a perfect 30 out of 30 score and was high score for the Platoon. On the days we do not get up extra early, we sleep in until five a.m. before getting up and doing P.T. If your soldier has not had a lot time to call or write home, it is not his fault. He is just too darn busy.

We have had two relatively easy days. One day, we learned a new army phrase . . . “Death by Power Point”. We spent a ten hour day sitting in the Post Theatre here at Camp Shelby getting briefed by the Brigade Staff. Mandatory briefings on EO, Safety & Hygiene, the importance of having your legal affairs in order and how to make sure your pay is right are just some of the briefings we received. All of it is very important, but after the first five hours, it all starts to blur.

The next day, we spent in processing through the medical and personnel sections. In the morning, everyone had their shot records reviewed, blood drawn and eyes and hearing checked. After lunch, we were off to personnel to insure our records were straight, that everyone had dog tags and our pay was going to the correct bank. Easy days, but long and important.

Our limited spare time is spent getting to know one another, doing laundry, organizing & maintaining our equipment, catching a few extra winks and of course thinking of you . . . our friends and families. Until next time, goodbye for now.

SFC Roscoe
Second Platoon Sergeant